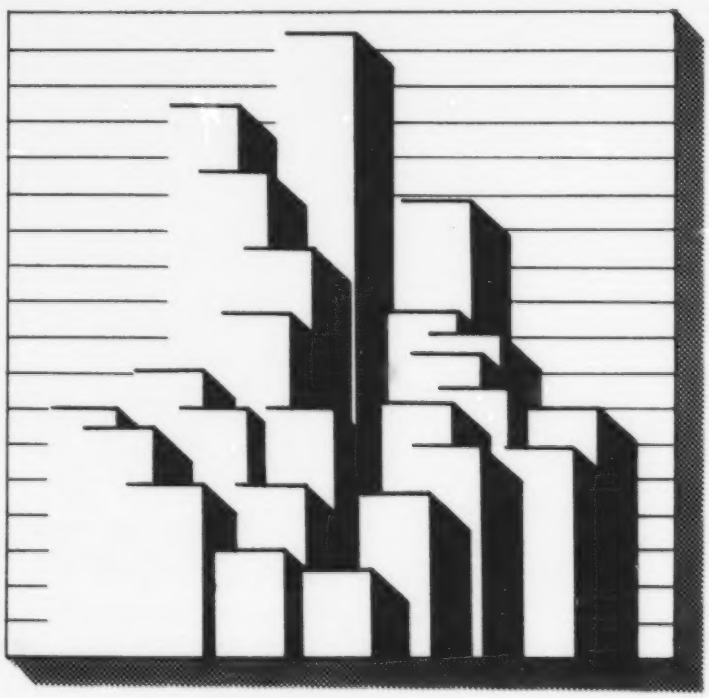
Strategic Planning Branch **REPORT**

Know Your City

Business Growth in Edmonton, 1989

Research Paper Number 35



May, 1990

The City of Edmonton PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

RESEARCH PAPER NO. 35

BUSINESS GROWTH IN EDMONTON 1989

BY

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Important Note: *This technical paper was prepared by the Forecasting and Policy Development Group, Strategic Planning Branch, Planning and Development Department. It documents research results as part of an ongoing forecasting activity. Neither the methods nor the results have been endorsed by the City of Edmonton. For more information call 428-8846.*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The report examines changes within Edmonton's business structure during 1989 as an indicator of economic growth. The major growth sectors and locations for new businesses are highlighted. The economy depends on an increasing influx of new business growth to replace business losses.

Small Businesses

Small businesses are important in job creation and offer opportunities for economic diversification and innovation.

Business Growth

Business growth was slow in 1989, compared with 1988. Although the increase in retail businesses was below the 1988 figure, retail trade generated the largest share of business growth. Business services also increased significantly, while construction businesses declined in number.

Location

In 1989 there was an increase in businesses in industrial areas. Garneau and Old Strathcona also experienced business growth. In contrast to the strong growth of 1987 and 1988, Downtown lost businesses in 1989.

BUSINESS GROWTH IN EDMONTON, 1989

1. INTRODUCTION

- **Business growth is an indicator of the strength of the local economy.**

Change in the number of businesses in a city is a useful indicator of economic growth. The following report examines changes within Edmonton's business structure during 1989. The report identifies shifts in the importance of different industrial sectors and different geographic areas of the city.

The City of Edmonton business assessment data base is the source of information for this analysis. Appendix B discusses the use of the data base.

- **New businesses must continue to replace businesses lost.**

New businesses are vital to sustained economic growth as some businesses decline and need replacement. As new products and technologies develop, loss of businesses is inevitable, but an economy will thrive if new business openings outpace closures. Steady growth occurs when new businesses are replacing older businesses in the same sector or geographic area. However, sudden changes from one sector to another will result in shifts in labour demand.

When business losses concentrate in selected areas of the city while new businesses locate elsewhere, those areas start to experience economic decline. A comprehensive approach is needed to deal with this problem because business losses are only one indicator of decline. New businesses stimulate the local economy by creating employment opportunities and providing additional sources of taxation revenue for the city. New job opportunities may then lead to immigration and the growing population and greater spending power will improve the market for businesses. Increasing municipal taxation revenue provides funds for capital improvements which, in turn, create jobs and may also help businesses operate more effectively.

Once an area starts to lose businesses, the effects can multiply. Other businesses close, property becomes vacant, population declines and taxation revenues fall. The area then becomes a drain on municipal resources, needing revitalization.

- **Small businesses create jobs and allow innovation.**

Small businesses are important in creating employment. They also provide alternative opportunities during economic downturns and as the economy adjusts to service sector growth. Small businesses may also offer greater flexibility with opportunities for part-time work and continuing work after retirement.

Small businesses can provide an effective means of diversifying the economy. They can be innovative in bringing specialized retail outlets to the public and offering a variety of merchandise. Small business can introduce new products and emerging high technologies.

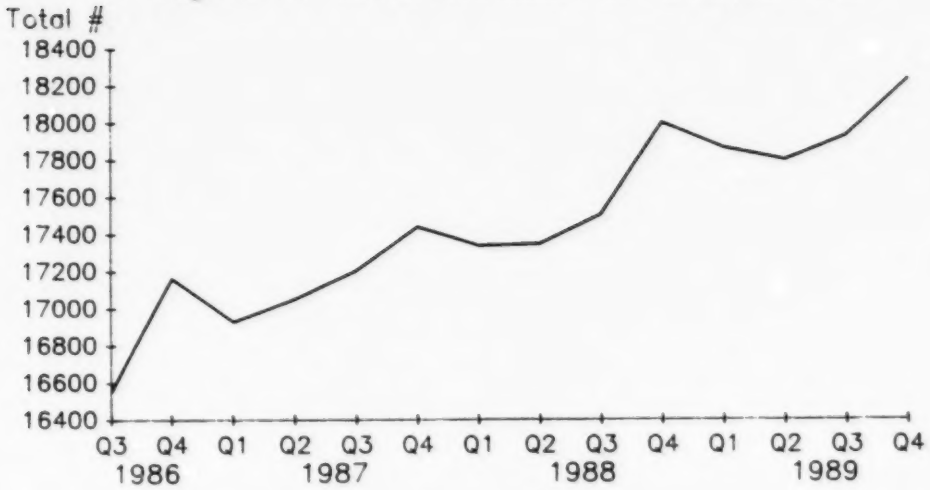
The diversification of Edmonton's economy is dependent on small businesses. As part of the Federal Government's current efforts to reduce costs, both provincial and municipal governments are likely to suffer cuts in grants and programs. Furthermore, the Provincial Government is assisting rural Alberta by moving some functions out of Edmonton. The result of these two measures is that government operations will no longer generate economic growth in Edmonton. New businesses can help to fill the vacuum.

- **New businesses have a key role in urban change.**

The opening of new businesses has an impact on employment, travel patterns and the character and vitality of an area. New businesses are not simply a response to changing circumstances, they are agents of change and the driving force behind revitalization.

The challenge for the City is to work through the business community to create lasting improvements in declining areas, to encourage growth of businesses and promote the city's business opportunities. Sustained economic growth is the result.

Figure 1: TOTAL NUMBER OF BUSINESSES



Source: Finance Department

2. 1989 BUSINESS GROWTH IN EDMONTON

- **Slow growth in 1989.**

Business growth was slow in 1989 following a buoyant 1988. During 1989, there was a net increase of 233 businesses, less than half the 1988 growth. The number of businesses rose during the year from 17,996 to 18,229, a 1.3% increase (Figure 1 and Table 1).

There were 2,828 new business starts (a 15.7% start-up rate) in 1989 and a loss of 2,595 businesses (a closure rate of 14.4%). The poor performance, compared with 1988, resulted from fewer new businesses opening. The increase in retired businesses in 1989 was small and the rate of business closure was below the 1988 rate of 14.6%.

A rise in interest rates was a likely deterrent to new business starts in 1989. The prime rate rose from an average of 10.8% in 1988 to 13.3% in 1989. The announcement of the 1991 Goods and Services Tax may also have had some effect on decisions to start businesses. Another possible explanation for fewer business starts in 1989 is that the retail sector experienced a period of adjustment after exceptional growth in 1988.

- **Business growth concentrates in the fourth quarter.**

Business growth figures reflected a strong seasonal pattern in 1989. The strongest growth took place during the fourth quarter with a net increase of 302 businesses. Earlier in 1989, business losses were heavier than those of recent years with a net loss of 201 businesses between January and June. In 1988, more substantial growth in the final quarter (a net increase of 493 businesses) brought the year to a successful conclusion. This momentum was not maintained during 1989.

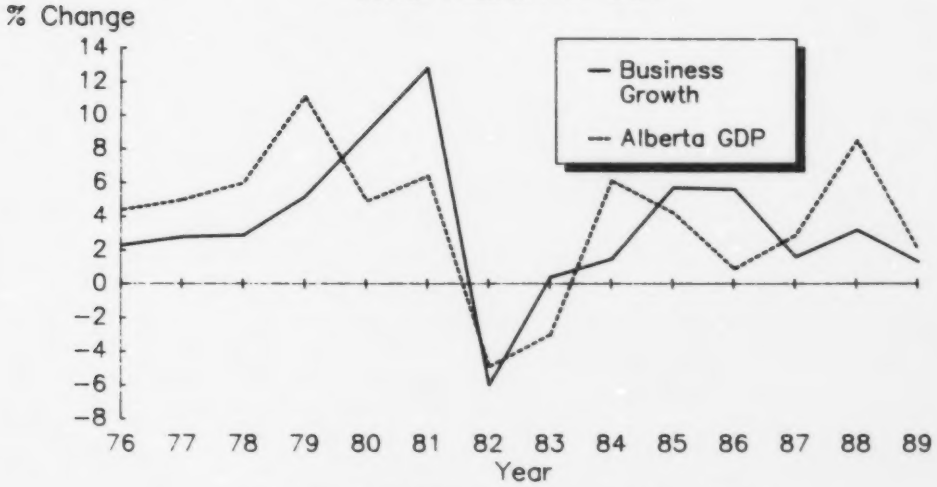
Greater turbulence and uncertainty occurred in 1989 than in either 1988 or 1987. The net growth of businesses achieved during the year is similar to that of 1987 (the 1987 net increase in businesses was 275). However, business losses during the first half of 1989 so reduced the number of businesses that it took stronger fourth quarter growth to compensate.

- **Businesses show variable growth pattern.**

Since 1976, the number of businesses in Edmonton has increased significantly, but growth has fluctuated considerably (Table 1).

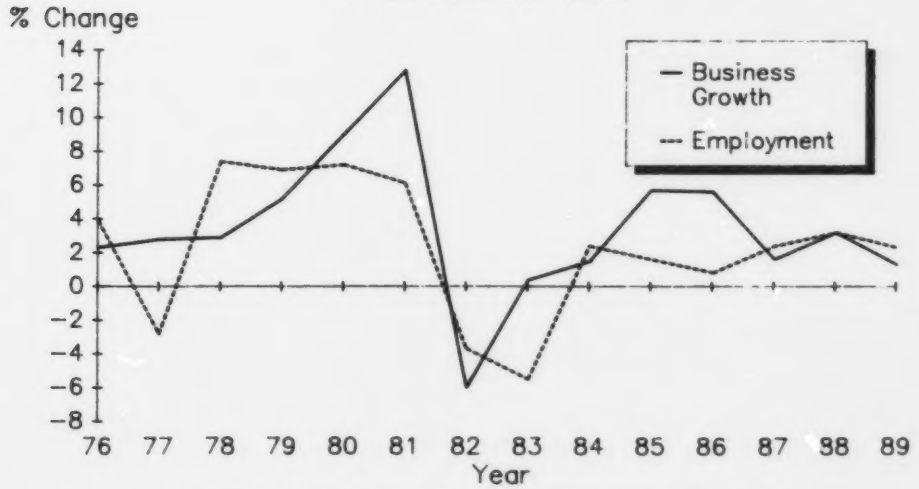
Growth was slow from 1976 to 1978, but accelerated in 1979 and 1980 to peak in 1981. The number of businesses declined by 950 during 1982 and not until 1985 did growth again occur. A net gain of only 275 businesses made 1987 a disappointing year. A significant improvement occurred in 1988, but 1989 showed

Figure 2: GROWTH IN EDMONTON BUSINESSES AND ALBERTA GDP



Source: Planning and Development Department.

Figure 3: GROWTH IN EDMONTON BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYMENT



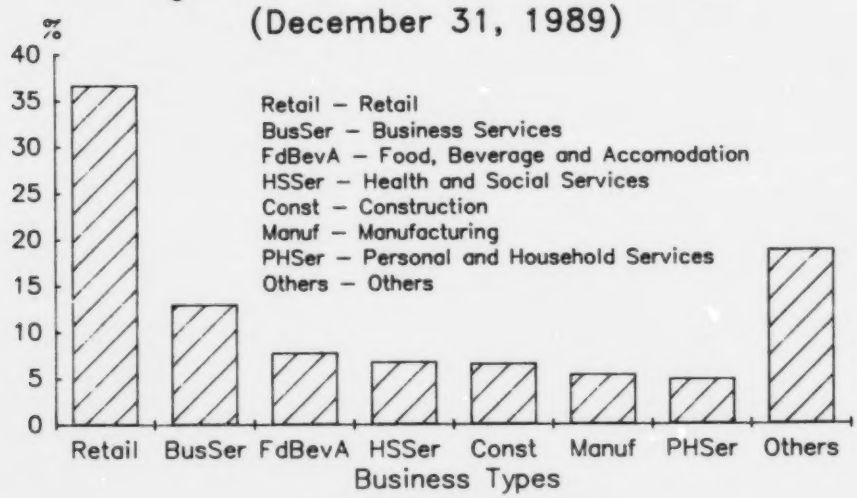
Source: Planning and Development Department.

a return to the 1987 growth rate. However, the increase in businesses during 1989 has kept pace with population growth (Table 2).

- **Business growth and the economy.**

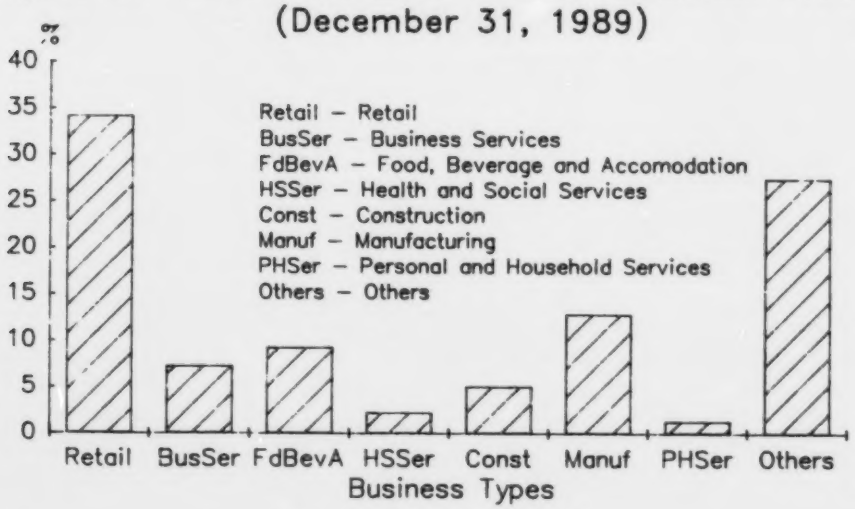
Figures 2 and 3 compare business growth with increases in Alberta gross domestic product (GDP) and with Edmonton employment growth. Edmonton's business growth follows Alberta GDP, with a lag of about one year. Figure 2 indicates that even if significant improvement takes place in the provincial economy, there is a delay of one year before the benefits show in Edmonton business growth. Employment change is less erratic than business growth because Edmonton's role as a service and government centre provides stability in employment levels.

Figure 4: MAJOR BUSINESS TYPES (December 31, 1989)



Source: Finance Department.

Figure 5: FLOORSPACE OF MAJOR BUSINESS TYPES (December 31, 1989)



Source: Finance Department.

3. COMPONENTS OF BUSINESS CHANGE

- **In Edmonton, retail businesses dominate.**

Retail trade dominates the city's business structure. More than one third of city businesses and assessed floorspace are in retailing (Figures 4 and 5).

The second largest group of businesses is business services, with 13% of total businesses. However, businesses of this type are small in scale and occupy only 7% of assessed floorspace.

Businesses in the food, beverage and accommodation category vary widely from small fast food outlets to major hotels. Including hotels in this group results in a higher proportion of assessed space compared with the number of businesses.

Other important business groups are health and social services, construction and manufacturing.

Lists of numbers of businesses and business floorspace for December 31, 1988 and 1989 appear in Tables 3 and 4. These tables update the information contained in "The City of Edmonton Business Floorspace Inventory".[1]

- **Retailing did not maintain 1988 growth.**

The retail trade sector experienced exceptional growth in 1988 with a net increase of 241 businesses, or 43% of total business growth. This large increase in retail businesses resulted from the completion of several new shopping centres and the renovation and expansion of older malls. It is not surprising that retail growth in 1989 did not measure up to 1988 levels. In 1989, retail businesses experienced a net increase of 80 businesses (a 1.2% increase). Even though this figure is far below that for 1988, retail trade still represented the largest share of total business growth in 1989.

- **Growth in business services increases. Construction businesses decline.**

Business services emerged as the group with the second largest increase in businesses in 1989. Their net growth totalled 48 businesses (a 2.1% increase) or twice the 1988 net growth. Wholesale trade also showed an improvement with net growth in 1989 of 21 businesses compared with a net increase of 16 businesses in 1988. The food, beverage and accommodation group was high on the list of growing sectors in 1989, with a net increase of 19 businesses. However, 1988 was a more successful year for growth of food, beverage and accommodation businesses,

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1 City of Edmonton Business Floorspace Inventory, Long Range Planning Branch, Planning and Building Department, August 1987.

with a net increase of 41 businesses. Manufacturing businesses also increased during 1989 (by 17 businesses) but this follows higher growth (26 businesses) during 1988.

The most notable change from 1988 occurred among construction businesses. In 1988, a net gain of 65 construction businesses occurred, second only to growth in retail trade. In 1989, this sector lost 10 businesses. A loss of construction businesses is compatible with the decline in the labour demand in construction between 1988 and 1989.[2]

Financial and insurance businesses suffered high losses once more. In 1988 this group declined by 11 businesses compared with a loss of 10 businesses in 1989.

Food, beverage and accommodation businesses experienced the highest rate of turnover of all business types (Table 5). Communications and utilities businesses also showed a high turnover rate, largely because of their high rate of closure (almost 23%). The most stable business groups are agriculture and health and social services.

- **Changes since 1986.**

Since 1986, the business group which experienced the most rapid growth was one of the smaller ones. Communication and utilities businesses had the highest growth rate, with a 15% net increase. This group includes courier services, which have experienced a sharp increase in demand in recent years.

Among the larger business groups, food beverage and accommodation businesses experienced a healthy rate of growth (8.1%), compared with 7.8% for retail trade and 7.1% for manufacturing.

The business groups which lost businesses since 1986 include recreation and amusement (-12.6%), mining and oilwell (-9.6%), and finance and insurance businesses (-8.8%).

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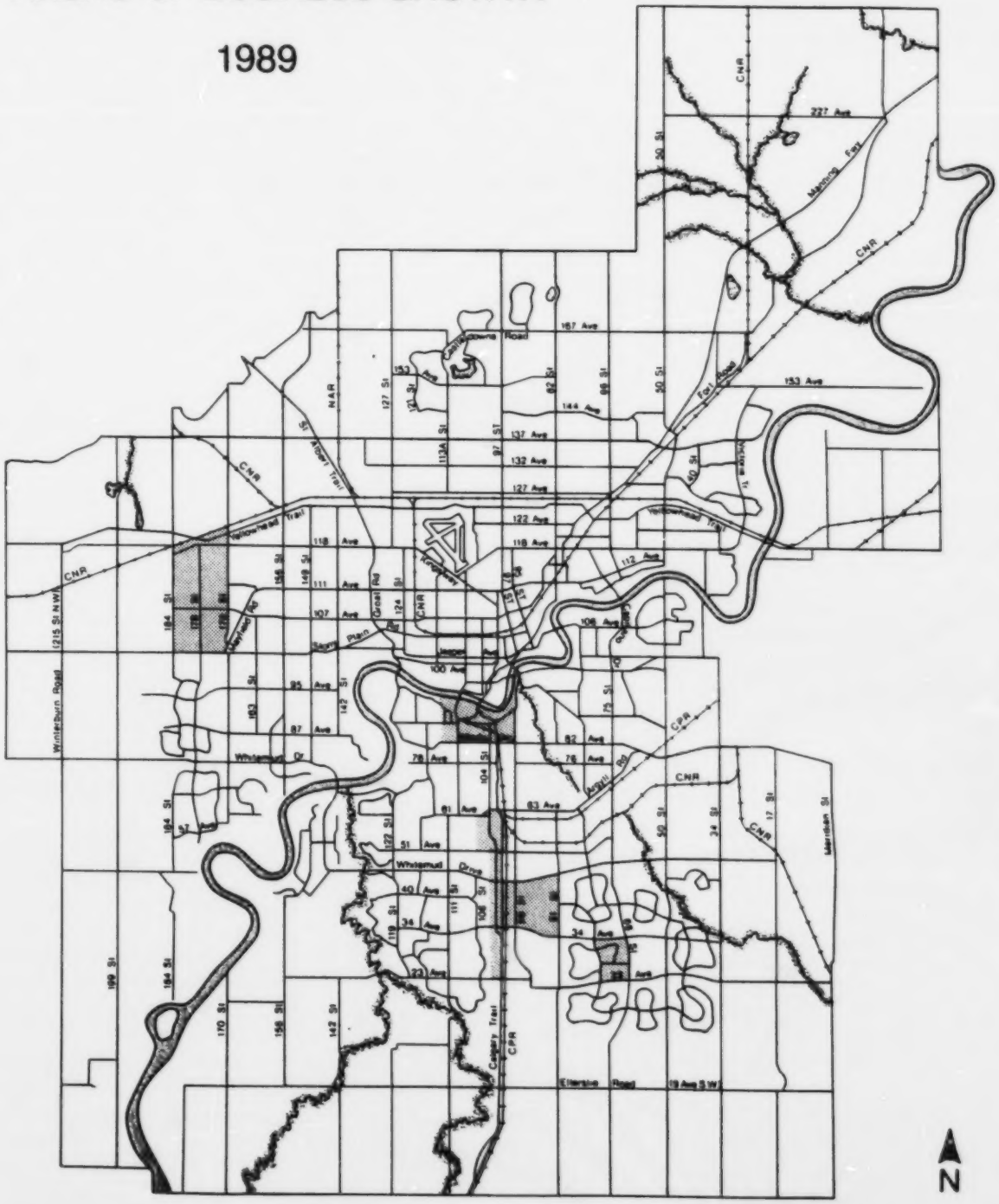
2 The Edmonton Labour Market, 1989-1993 by Patrick Walters, Planning and Development Department, October 1989.

MAP 1

AREAS OF BUSINESS GROWTH

1989



SOURCE: FINANCE DEPARTMENT

4. BUSINESS SIZE

- **Retail businesses are becoming smaller.**

Since September 1986, the average indoor floorspace of businesses in Edmonton has decreased (Table 6), but during 1989 average size increased slightly and retained a consistent level of 516 square metres throughout the year. The trend towards smaller businesses results from a decrease in the size of retail businesses and food, beverage and accommodation businesses. Other business types have increased their average space, especially finance and insurance businesses and wholesale trade operations.

The average size of new and retired businesses in 1989 was far below that of the total of existing businesses. Small businesses and small units of larger businesses continue to be important components of total business growth. The average size of new businesses in 1989 was 285 square metres, the same as in 1988. Businesses retiring during 1989 had an average size of 323 square metres, an increase from the 1988 figure of 280 square metres.

5. LOCATION OF BUSINESS GROWTH

- **Increase in businesses in industrial areas.**

The city's industrial areas were important for business growth during 1989. The Northwest Industrial Area, which experienced significant growth in 1988, continued as a major growth centre, especially to the west of 170 Street. There was a net increase of 47 businesses in the Northwest Industrial Area during 1989. Growth to the west of 170 Street reached a total of 31 businesses for the year. Industrial land on the south side of the city also generated a high level of business growth. Papaschase Industrial and the Strathcona Industrial Park together provided a strong focus for new businesses with a net increase of 35 businesses.

Although the growth of businesses in industrial areas is encouraging, traditional industrial business types are responsible for only a small share of growth. A variety of business types accounted for the increase in businesses in the Northwest Industrial Area. Business services generated the most growth in 1989, followed by transportation and wholesale trade. This area is unusual because there was a decline in retail businesses even though total businesses increased.

A similar growth pattern occurred in the Strathcona Industrial Park during 1989 as business services created the largest increase in businesses while retail businesses declined. Other growing business types included real estate and insurance businesses, manufacturing and construction.

Retail businesses together with business services generated a major part of the growth in the Papaschase Industrial Area. Manufacturing and construction businesses declined in the Papaschase Industrial Area.

- **Growth returns to Garneau and Old Strathcona.**

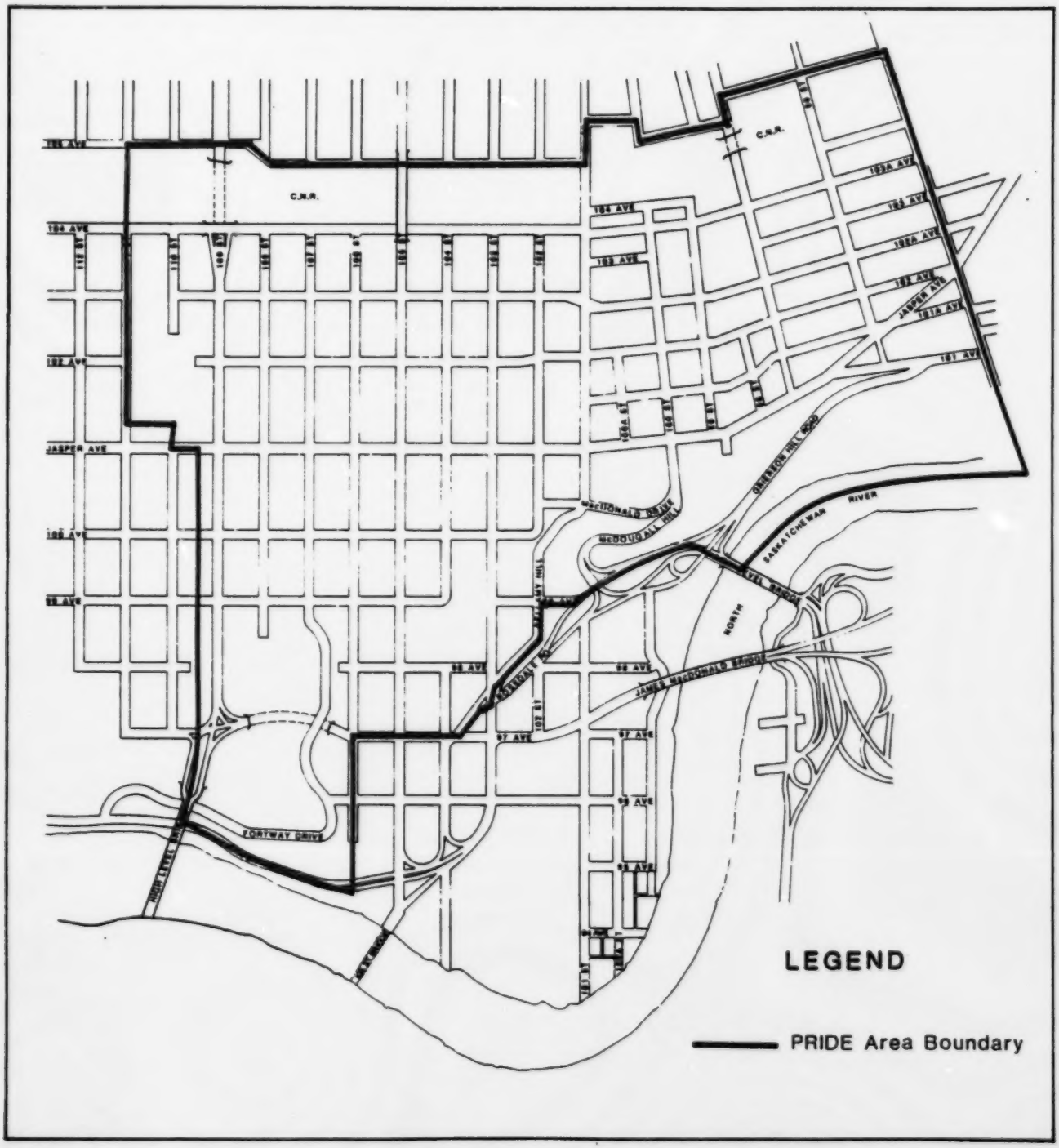
Garneau and Old Strathcona emerged again in 1989 as focal points for growth after experiencing no net growth during 1988. In 1987, this area had a net gain of 27 businesses. In 1989, a net gain of 25 businesses occurred. Retail businesses were responsible for the largest share of this growth.

The Calgary Trail has attracted many new businesses during 1989, especially in retail trade. (See section on Major Commercial Corridors.)

Millwoods is another area on the south side of the city where businesses are increasing. The Millwoods Town Centre opened in 1988 and continued to attract new businesses in 1989, together with other locations in Millwoods. The 1989 net growth totalled 23 businesses.

Map 2

The Downtown (PRIDE AREA)



- **Downtown loses businesses.**

Downtown was the major focus of business growth in 1987 and 1988, but the picture changed dramatically in 1989 when Downtown lost 51 businesses. The biggest losses occurred among retail, construction, finance and food, beverage and accommodation businesses.

The decline in retail businesses, which made up 47% of the total net loss of Downtown businesses, is an adjustment after exceptional retail growth in 1988. In 1988, Downtown had the largest share of the city's business growth (23% of the total net increase in businesses) and retail businesses made up 84% of this growth. The opening of Eaton Centre Phase II, Manulife Place Phase II and the expansion of Edmonton Centre helped to transform Downtown retailing. The opening of so many new stores put pressure on existing businesses and increased competition, resulting in the loss of retail businesses in 1989. The same reasoning may also apply to food, beverage and accommodation businesses which often accompany retail businesses.

The loss of other types of businesses is of greater concern. During 1989 there was a net loss of 13 construction businesses, representing almost a 25% decline in the number of construction businesses in the Downtown. This follows a decline of seven construction businesses in 1988. Compared to the whole city, Downtown is losing construction businesses at a higher rate. In 1988, Edmonton gained 65 (net) construction businesses across the city, compared with the loss of 7 in the Downtown. During 1989 the net loss of construction businesses was higher in the Downtown than for the whole city. As a result, Downtown is losing its share of construction businesses. Similarly, net losses in finance and insurance businesses from Downtown are significant. Their loss represents a higher percentage of existing businesses than the figure for the whole city.

Changes are occurring to the business fabric of the Downtown. Retailing continues to be the most important sector with 27% of Downtown businesses, followed by business services with 20%. Retail businesses are concentrating increasingly in the central Downtown shopping centres, linked by the pedway system. The peripheral areas are declining. Other business types are becoming less prominent in the Downtown but the diversity of Downtown as an employment centre must be maintained if revitalization efforts are to have a major impact.

- **Both inner city and suburban areas lose businesses.**

Both sides of Stony Plain Road from 149 Street to 170 Street are a secondary focus of business losses, with a net loss of 19 businesses during 1989. Most of this loss occurred among retail businesses.

The other areas which lost businesses during 1989 are the suburban areas in the northeast of the city. In contrast, the southwestern suburbs showed growth in businesses.

- **Major Commercial Corridors**

Large scale commercial developments have transformed the major highway entrances to the city. In response, the Planning and Development Department has established a task force to develop guidelines for further growth along the highways. The task force has concentrated on the areas shown on the maps in Appendix A. The figures below show the growth in businesses in 1989 for each of the major commercial corridors.

1989 Growth of Businesses in Major Commercial Corridors

	Change in # Businesses
Stony Plain Road/100 Avenue	- 5
137 Avenue/St. Albert Trail	14
Fort Road/Manning Freeway	6
Calgary Trail	16

The Calgary Trail and 137 Avenue experienced significant business growth during the year, while Stony Plain Road suffered a net loss of businesses.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- The city needs thriving new businesses to maintain economic growth.
- Small businesses play an important role in employment creation.
- Business growth was slow in 1989.
- Retail trade continued to be the major growth sector, but the pace of growth slowed down in 1989.
- Downtown suffered a loss of businesses in 1989, especially in the retail sector.
- The industrial areas are primary locations of growth in businesses, particularly in business services.

TABLE 1: EDMONTON BUSINESS GROWTH (HISTORICAL DATA)

YEAR	# BUSINESS PREMISES (at end of year)	INCREASE/DECREASE	% CHANGE
1976	11,719	268	2.3
1977	12,050	331	2.8
1978	12,400	350	2.9
1979	13,050	650	5.2
1980	14,227	1,177	9.0
1981	16,044	1,817	12.8
1982	15,085	- 959	- 6.0
1983	15,151	66	0.4
1984	15,378	227	1.5
1985	16,249	871	5.7
1986	17,163	914	5.6
1987	17,438	275	1.6
1988	17,996	558	3.2
1989	18,229	233	1.3

SOURCE: Finance Department

TABLE 2: EDMONTON BUSINESSES PER 1,000 POPULATION

YEAR	POPULATION	NO. OF BUSINESSES (at start of year)	BUSINESSES PER 1,000 POPULATION
1976	461,554	11,451	24.8
1977	471,474	11,719	24.9
1978	478,066	12,050	25.2
1979	491,359	12,400	25.2
1980	505,773	13,050	25.8
1981	521,205	14,227	27.3
1982	551,314	16,044	29.1
1983	560,085	15,085	26.9
1984	564,000	15,151	26.9
1985	568,000	15,378	27.1
1986	571,506	16,249	28.4
1987	576,249	17,163	29.8
1988	580,800 (e)	17,438	30.0
1989	583,900	17,996	30.8
1990	591,700	18,229	30.8

Source: Planning and Development Department
Finance Department
(e) estimate

TABLE 3: TOTAL BUSINESSES BY TYPE, DECEMBER 31, 1989

		No.	%	Indoor Space (sq.m.)	%
1.	Retail Trade	6,690	36.7	3,217,294	34.2
2.	Business Services	2,375	13.0	685,580	7.3
3.	Food, Beverage and Accommodation	1,413	7.8	874,080	9.3
4.	Health and Social Services	1,242	6.8	214,994	2.3
5.	Construction	1,200	6.6	476,930	5.1
6.	Manufacturing	985	5.4	1,208,321	12.9
7.	Personal and Household Services	889	4.9	133,656	1.4
8.	Wholesale Trade	809	4.4	1,024,866	10.9
9.	Finance and Insurance	469	2.6	230,401	2.5
10.	Other Services	456	2.5	74,039	0.8
11.	Unclassified	423	2.3	257,305	2.7
12.	Transportation and Storage	409	2.2	445,471	4.7
13.	Real Estate and Insurance Agents	265	1.5	71,729	0.8
14.	Mining and Oilwell	217	1.2	166,046	1.8
15.	Recreation and Amusement	146	0.8	147,619	1.6
16.	Communication and Utilities	107	0.6	118,043	1.3
17.	Educational Services	88	0.5	21,267	0.2
18.	Agriculture and Related	46	0.3	33,544	0.4
	TOTAL	18,229		9,401,185	

SOURCE: Finance Department
Planning and Development Department Classification

TABLE 4: TOTAL BUSINESSES BY TYPE, DECEMBER 31, 1988

		No.	%	Indoor Space (sq.m.)	%
1.	Retail Trade	6,610	36.7	3,149,593	34.2
2.	Business Services	2,327	12.9	669,529	7.3
3.	Food, Beverage and Accommodation	1,394	7.7	864,783	9.4
4.	Health and Social Services	1,239	6.9	210,097	2.3
5.	Construction	1,210	6.7	468,526	5.1
6.	Manufacturing	968	5.4	1,183,191	12.9
7.	Personal and Household Services	888	4.9	123,972	1.3
8.	Wholesale Trade	788	4.4	982,756	10.7
9.	Finance and Insurance	479	2.7	229,633	2.5
10.	Other Services	450	2.5	70,447	0.8
11.	Transportation and Storage	392	2.2	466,612	5.1
12.	Unclassified	370	2.1	226,540	2.5
13.	Real Estate and Insurance Agents	256	1.4	68,396	0.7
14.	Mining and Oilwell	223	1.2	177,730	1.9
15.	Recreation and Amusement	155	0.9	151,340	1.6
16.	Communication and Utilities	114	0.6	107,033	1.2
17.	Educational Services	86	0.5	21,204	0.2
18.	Agriculture and Related	47	0.3	33,888	0.4
	TOTAL	17,996		9,205,270	

SOURCE: Finance Department
Planning and Development Department Classification

TABLE 5: RATE OF TURNOVER OF BUSINESSES, 1989

	No. of New Businesses	Creation Rate (%)	No. of Retired Businesses	Closure Rate (%)
Retail Trade	1,101	16.7	1,012	15.3
Business Services	338	14.5	290	12.5
Food, Beverage & Accommodation	341	24.5	323	23.2
Health & Social Services	87	7.0	83	6.7
Construction	192	15.9	200	16.5
Manufacturing	121	12.5	111	11.5
Personal & Household	142	16.0	146	16.4
Wholesale Trade	99	12.6	79	10.0
Finance & Insurance	38	7.9	49	10.2
Other Services	51	11.3	47	10.4
Transportation	62	15.8	44	11.2
Real Estate & Insurance Agents	38	14.8	30	11.7
Mining & Oilwell	21	9.4	28	12.6
Unclassified	135	36.5	79	21.4
Recreation & Amusement	24	15.5	32	20.6
Communication & Utilities	20	17.5	26	22.8
Education Services	16	18.6	14	16.3
Agriculture & Related	2	4.3	2	4.3
Total	2,828	15.7	2,595	14.4

Source: Planning and Development Department

TABLE 6: AVERAGE BUSINESS SIZE BASED ON SQUARE METRES OF INDOOR SPACE

	Sept. 1986	Dec. 1986	Mar. 1987	June 1987	Sept. 1987	Dec. 1987	Mar. 1988	June 1988	Sept. 1988	Dec. 1988	Mar. 1989	June 1989	Sept. 1989	Dec. 1989
All Businesses	521	513	518	515	511	511	512	514	N/A	512	516	516	516	516
Retail Trade	497	489	490	482	478	474	474	480	479	476	478	474	477	481
Business Services	273	274	267	270	278	281	284	283	291	288	292	297	298	289
Food, Beverage & Accommodation	628	627	642	638	634	633	634	636	627	620	634	632	623	619
Health & Social Services	159	157	158	158.5	160	162	164	166	167	170	171	171	172	173
Manufacturing	1,218	1,191	1,226	1,224	1,222	1,217	1,218	1,211	1,217	1,222	1,236	1,227	1,225	1,227
Personal & Household Services	134	133	140	138	138	140	141	141	141	140	140	147	148	150
Wholesale Trade	1,226	1,224	1,224	1,242	1,245	1,258	1,246	1,245	1,253	1,247	1,252	1,253	1,249	1,267
Finance & Insurance	434	440	455	460	459	461	465	467	461	479	487	494	492	491

Source: Finance Department

APPENDIX A

MAJOR COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

STONY PLAIN ROAD/100 AVENUE

Appendix II to Schedule 814 of Bylaw 5996 as amended by Bylaw 9292 and subsequent appropriate Bylaws

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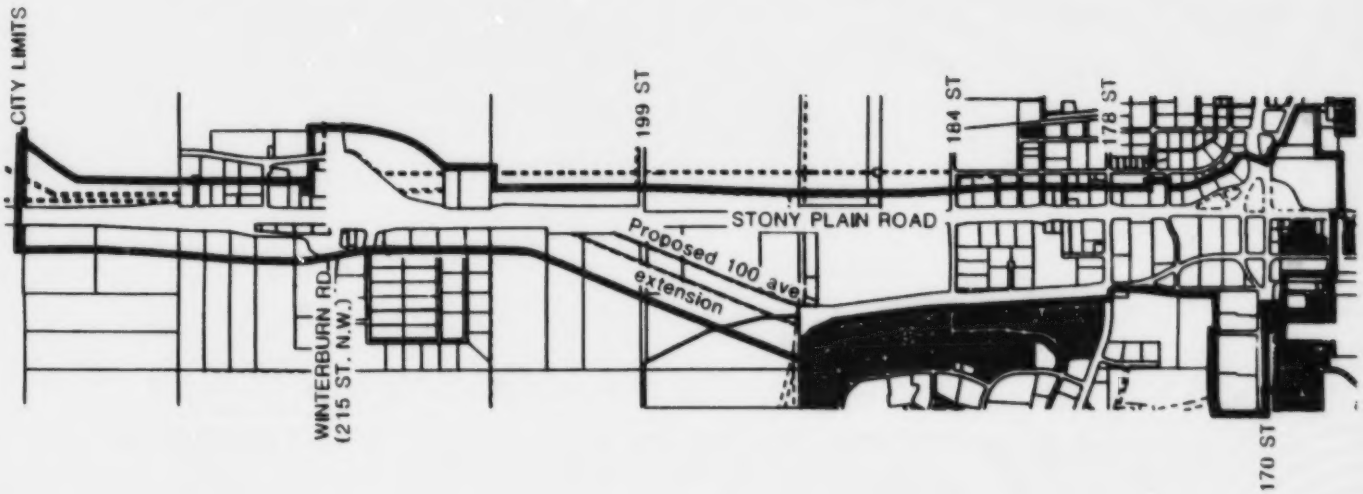

NOVEMBER 1989

MAJOR COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

137 AVENUE/ST. ALBERT TRAIL

Appendix I to Schedule 814 of Bylaw 5996 as amended by Bylaw 9292 and subsequent appropriate Bylaws

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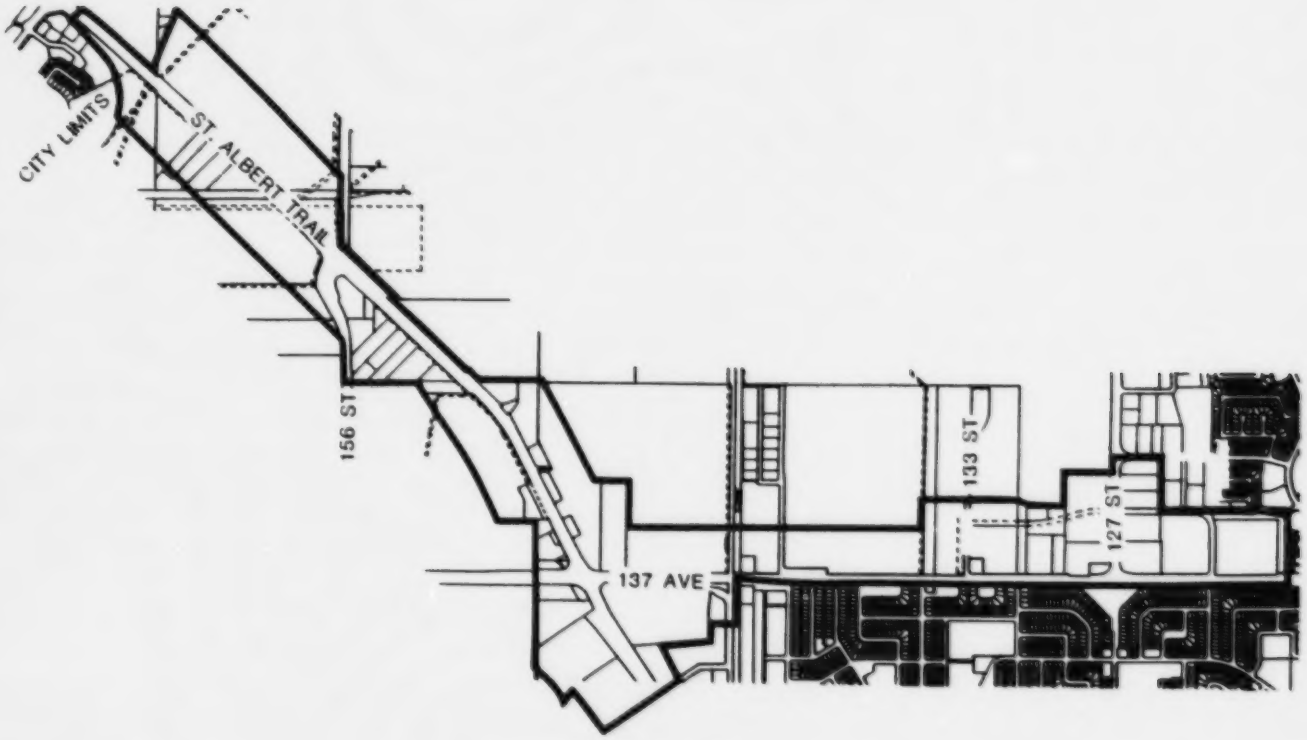
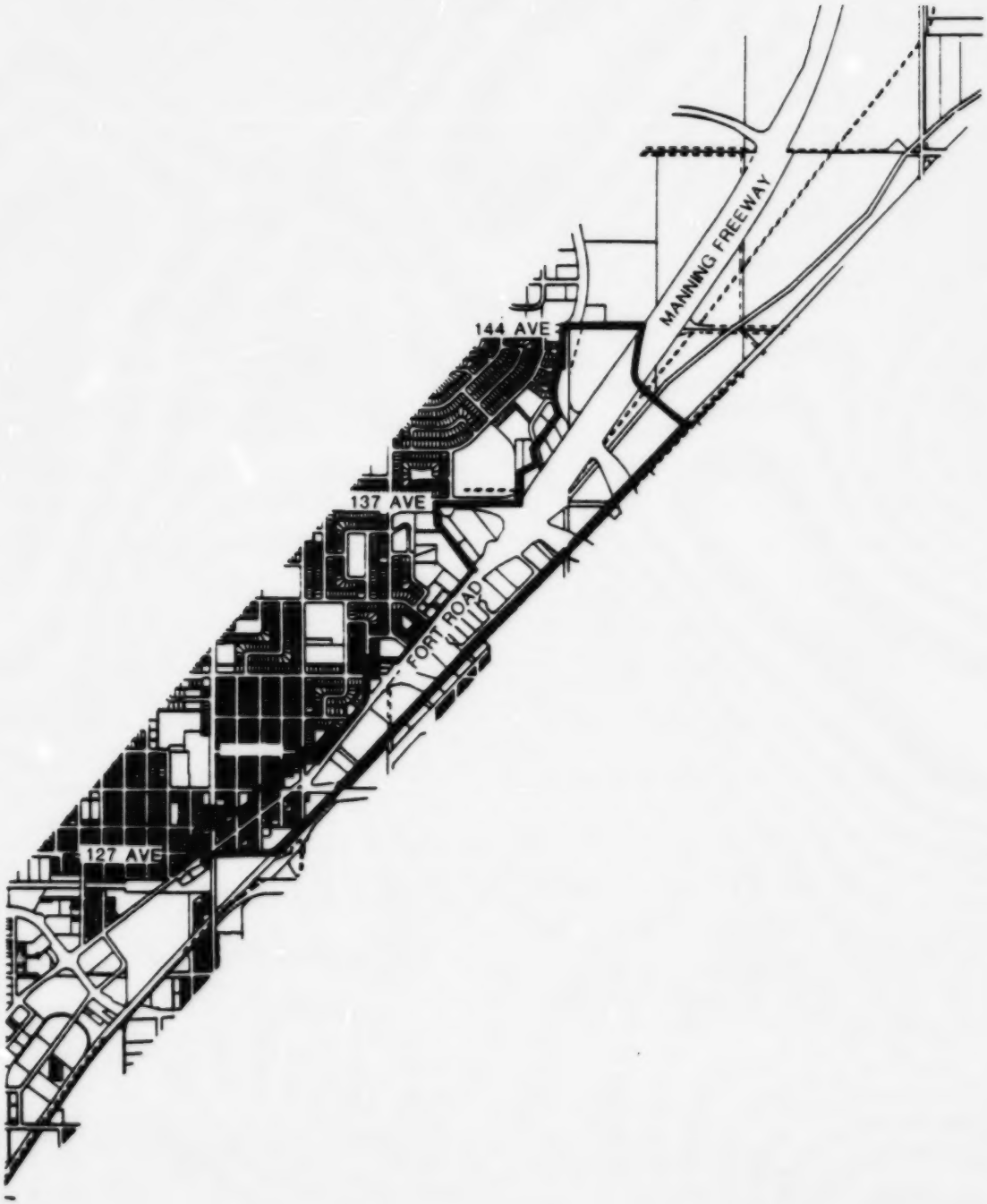


NOVEMBER 1989

MAJOR COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

FORT ROAD/MANNING FREEWAY

Appendix IV to Schedule B14 of Bylaw 5996 as amended by Bylaw 9292 and subsequent appropriate Bylaws

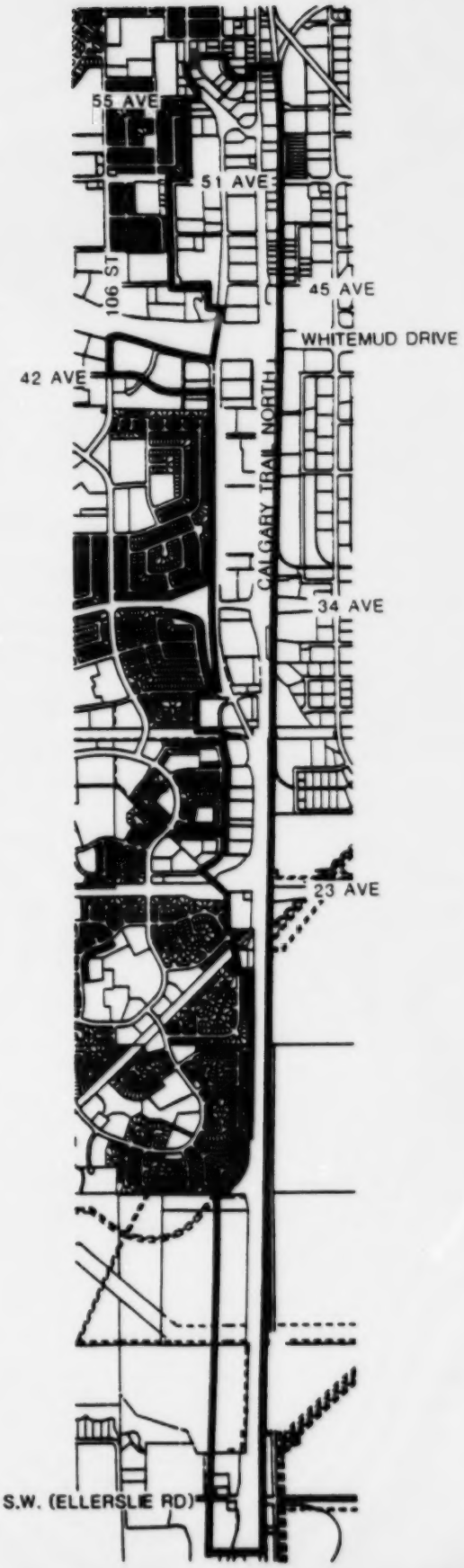


NOVEMBER 1989

MAJOR COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

CALGARY TRAIL

Appendix II to Schedule 814 of Bylaw 5996 as amended by Bylaw 9292 and subsequent appropriate Bylaws



NOVEMBER 1989

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

NOTE ON BUSINESS ASSESSMENT DATA

Data Source:

The report "Business Growth in Edmonton" uses data from the business assessment data base maintained by the Finance Department. The information is for business taxes and has limitations in its application to other uses.

Quarterly Data:

The Planning and Development Department received business assessment data on a quarterly basis since mid-1986. The data provides a means of tracking business change within the city, giving the number of business accounts added and the number of businesses dropped from the assessment records each quarter. A count of assessed businesses in the city is provided at the end of each quarter. This figure may be lower than data from other sources because subtenants are not always included. There are no business accounts for most Crown corporations and non-profit organizations. Also, many businesses in the home are not recorded.

Business Changes:

The figures for new and retiring businesses include changes within the city's business structure which do not involve the creation of a new business or the loss of a business. A new account may be created and the existing one closed if a business moves and continuity is not maintained because time elapses before the business reopens. A change in ownership will also result in a new assessment account but the business operation may remain the same.

The information on existing, new and retired businesses is complemented by floorspace data, but there is no record kept of vacant space.

Business Types:

The assessment data provides a profile of Edmonton's business structure by giving the number of businesses and the floorspace of each business type. The relative growth of each sector can therefore be monitored each quarter. A code is assigned to each business by the assessors to identify its type. These codes have been recategorized by the Planning and Development Department to make the business groups comparable with those used by Statistics Canada.

Location of Businesses:

Business data is available by assessment work area, which allows some locational analysis. However, the work areas do not correspond with other geographic units and they vary widely in size and characteristics, so that comparison between them is difficult. The report "Business Growth in Edmonton" contains a brief discussion on some of the major areas of interest in the city. More detailed information on changes in the business structure of specific areas is available from the Strategic Planning Branch.